



## Director of Finance and Operations

Stevens Cooperative School, an independent, non-sectarian day school in Hoboken and Jersey City, New Jersey, seeks an experienced and mission-driven finance and operations leader to serve as its next Director of Finance and Operations.

### Stevens Cooperative School

*We imagine a world with well-informed, engaged citizens who are motivated to make a difference. In partnership with our diverse faculty, staff, families, and the greater community, Stevens Cooperative School students explore, question, and communicate in ways that will inspire and shape the future.*

*—Stevens Cooperative School Mission*

In 1949, professors at Stevens Institute of Technology began a playgroup for their own young children, forming Stevens Cooperative School with just a few students. Today, and many generations later, Stevens has grown to more than 430 students, ages 2 through 14, and expanded its reach to campuses located in Hoboken and Jersey City, New Jersey, just across the Hudson River from Manhattan.

Stevens employs 71 full-time and eight part-time teaching professionals, as well as 30 administrative staff. Thirty eight percent of faculty and 45 percent of administrators identify as people of color. Stevens' average class size is 16 and student/teacher ratio is 8:1. The community of lifelong learners, including students, teachers, parents, and grandparents, is active and engaged in the life of the School.

Like many of its peers, Stevens has faced some difficult circumstances brought on by the pandemic. Despite these challenges, Stevens' financial condition is strong. Stevens has an annual operating budget of \$12 million and reserves of \$5.6 million in unrestricted funds. Stevens benefits from a generous annual giving campaign that raised nearly \$400,000 and event fundraising that raised nearly \$300,000 in 2019-2020. In the last ten years, giving to the Annual Fund has increased by 230 percent. Robust auxiliary programs such as summer camps, facilities rentals, and extended day options generate additional sources of revenue.

Given unanticipated, Covid-related expenses in 2020, Stevens foresees a deficit for the first time in a decade. In 2020 Stevens benefited from two rounds of PPP funds, the first of which has already been forgiven. PPP funds are expected to cover the vast majority of the projected manageable deficit.

The school's mission and core values of *Diversity & Equity, Community, Progressive Teaching & Learning*, and *Continuous Improvement* are described within the framework of the school's [strategic vision](#).

### Stevens' Identity as a Cooperative

Being part of a cooperative school is a rewarding experience that gives parents and guardians the opportunity to be an integral part of their child's education. As a member of the cooperative, families, children, faculty, and staff all benefit from a strong partnership between home and school.

At Stevens, families are invited into the classroom to engage in a hands-on way with students and faculty as active participants in the life of the School. Seeing their parents and guardians as a part of their education provides students with an increased feeling of support and encouragement and facilitates the development of self-confidence while boosting classroom motivation. Seeing their child's class in action, parents and guardians are exposed to the teacher's education style and can better understand how the curriculum is implemented. Stevens faculty, staff, and administration benefit from this home-school partnership through strong connections and close relationships with their students' families.

Being a member of the cooperative means that families have the opportunity to share their talents when completing their yearly cooperative jobs. At Stevens, the family voice is incorporated into school-wide decision-making by amending school bylaws and voting on new trustees. Fourteen of the Board's twenty seats are voted on by parents; the remaining six seats are appointed.

### Diversity & Equity

*We believe an equitable and inclusive learning environment creates empowering and supportive experiences that build a more just and compassionate world. Stevens Cooperative School is a safe place for students to develop their authentic identities and grow an appreciation for how diversity enriches our lives. We strive to be a school comprised of unique individuals of different backgrounds, identities, and beliefs, where all voices are equally valued and respected. We actively attempt to fight intolerance, discrimination, and inequity.*

*Our school is a place where all members feel empowered, embraced, and celebrated for who they are. We provide students, faculty, staff, and families with the resources, tools, and opportunities needed to engage ethically with the larger community and shape the future. We are committed to exploring and understanding personal and systemic biases, so that students can become the best form of themselves and advocate for others. Students take action and study issues of social justice in ways that facilitate and deepen their understanding of power, personal responsibility and social change.*

*At Stevens Cooperative School, our diversity is our unity and a cornerstone of our growth as human beings and global citizens.*

*—Stevens Diversity Statement*

Stevens Cooperative School remains deeply committed to becoming a more equitable and anti-racist institution. In November 2018, the Stevens community reflected upon the many ways it brings its mission and diversity statements to life by participating in the Assessment of Inclusivity and Multiculturalism (AIM), provided by the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). The survey was offered to all of the adults in the Stevens community (families, faculty and staff, and trustees), members of the last five graduating classes, and students in third through eighth grades.

From March to August of 2019, through ongoing collaboration between AIM Steering Committee members, faculty and staff, and the leadership team, an action plan was created in response to the data focused on seven strategic goals to achieve over the next three years. These goals comprise SEVEN S.T.R.I.D.E.S. (Systemically Tracking and Realizing Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Strategies). More information about the AIM Action Plan and the SEVEN S.T.R.I.D.E.S. that emerged from this process can be viewed [here](#).

In light of Stevens' continuing mission to build transparency, accountability, and a common understanding of the ongoing work around diversity and equity, the School shares [this progress report](#) with the School community. This report is updated quarterly and serves as a resource for community members on how the School is doing in terms of fulfilling these goals. It is also a way for Stevens constituents to hold the institution accountable in this important work.

Please click [here](#) to learn more about Diversity & Equity at Stevens.

### **Dr. Sergio Alati, Head of School**

Dr. Alati came to Stevens as Head of School in 2012. He served previously at Kent Place School as the Director of Studies, overseeing the evaluation of instruction programs, curricular development, and innovation. Before that role, he served as Director of the Primary School at Kent Place.

In addition to his Ed.D. in curriculum and teaching from Teachers College, Columbia University, he received a Master of Science in elementary education from Hunter College. He sits on the NJAIS Board of Trustees.

### **Campuses**

Stevens Cooperative School serves students on campuses in [Hoboken](#) and [Newport/Jersey City](#).

#### **Hoboken**

In Hoboken, school facilities include 301 Bloomfield Street, 339 River Street, and 301 Garden Street.

301 Bloomfield Street is home to Stevens' two-year-olds program. The two-story building features bright classrooms for two-year-olds as well as the Harrell Room, a science and media lab. Stevens built the facility in 2003 to accommodate the area's growing need for early childhood programs.

Hoboken three-year-olds, Pre-K, and Kindergarten classes are located at 339 River Street, a 7,000+-square-foot space designed for the School's early childhood programs. In addition to purpose-built classrooms, the space features a multi-purpose art and movement room and access to an outdoor rooftop playground within the building. The facility is also steps away from Stevens Park.

First through eighth graders in Hoboken occupy the third floor of the historic Rue Building at 301 Garden Street. The facility features newly renovated, large, light-filled classrooms, an art room, a movement and music room, and a multi-purpose space. The Rue Building also contains a gymnasium.

The Hoboken campus buildings are all within walking distance of the Hoboken train terminal.

### Newport/Jersey City

The Newport campus serves students in Kindergarten through eighth grade in a beautiful 20,000-square-foot space on the ground floor of the Aqua Blu building, located at 100 River Drive South.

Designed for active learning and Stevens' progressive curriculum, the Newport campus features specially equipped rooms for science, media studies, art, and music. A large gymnasium functions as a performance venue and gathering place for community activities. Stevens students have exclusive use of a private outdoor play area overlooking the Hudson River and New York City skyline and access to the Newport Green, skating rink, and fitness center.

The Newport campus is a short walk from both the Newport and Hoboken train stations. The waterfront walkway between Hoboken and Newport provides easy access to both Stevens' campuses.

### Location and Local Culture

#### Hoboken

Nicknamed the Mile Square City for its compact size, Hoboken offers an urban lifestyle with a small town feel. According to Walk Score®, Hoboken is the most walkable city in New Jersey, scoring a 95 out of 100. Locally owned stores and a vast array of restaurants – and a population that promotes its sense of community – make it easy to transition from transplant to local.

Although Hoboken is known for being the birthplace of Frank Sinatra, its current arts scene is alive and thriving with pockets of artist culture to be found all around. The city organizes multiple art and music festivals throughout the year, as well as Movies Under the Stars and Theatre in the Park in the summer.

#### Newport/Jersey City

The urban development of Jersey City began as a result of its location as a central hub for the national railroad system. With transportation across the entire country and Ellis Island within its borders, Jersey City quickly became a destination for immigrants and travelers to settle and reside.

Today, a wave of new residents are discovering Jersey City, making it the fastest growing and most diverse community in the metropolitan area. The city continues to represent nationalities from all over the world. New developments of residential towers, condominiums, and transportation options are quickly expanding the Newport neighborhood and making it the fastest growing up-and-coming neighborhood in the city.

While so much is packed into Hoboken and Jersey City, there are still plenty of parks, piers, and green spaces to enjoy. With Manhattan a 10-minute train or ferry ride away, a rail system that navigates the Northeast, and multiple international airports less than 20 miles away, the world is at your door.

### The Director of Finance and Operations Position

Reporting to Head of School Dr. Sergio Alati, and working in service to the Stevens mission, the Director works collaboratively with the Head of School, the board of trustees, and the leadership team to ensure congruence between the financial and business operations of the School, its mission, core values, and

strategic initiatives. The Director understands and appreciates the balance between the business elements of the School and its educational purpose. The Director contributes to the senior management team's efforts to promote an organizational culture of collaboration, open and frequent communication, adaptation, alignment with a common vision, and celebration of success in achieving specific projects and broader organizational objectives.

The Director provides management and analysis of the School's finances, in addition to leadership of critical operational areas of the School and establishes financial and operational strategies that enhance the value proposition of the institution. The Director oversees all administrative functions, including finance/accounting, IT, operations, and facilities. Human Resources reports to the Head of School in areas including the staff experience, onboarding, and offboarding, and reports to the Director of Finance and Operations regarding payroll, benefits, and related areas. The Director also oversees the Business Office which consists of an HR Manager, Controller, and Business Operations Coordinator.

Specifically, the Director of Finance and Operations has responsibility for the following areas:

#### *Financial Management*

- Oversee the finance function as a whole, supervising the controller and business operations coordinator.
- Ensure the Head of School, Finance Committee, and Board have access to accurate and reliable financial information and analysis.
- As a member of the Financial Aid Committee, and as a leader in the School committed to making Stevens accessible to students from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, contribute towards defining and managing the school's financial aid strategy.
- Serve on the Board Finance Committee and oversee creation and management of the School's budget.
- Provide regular financial and cash flow forecasting to the Head of School and Finance Committee.
- Work with the Head of School to create and evaluate long-term, multi-year strategic financial plans.

#### *Audit, Compliance, and Internal Controls*

- Coordinate all audit activities and oversee the timely completion of the School's annual 990 tax return.
- Ensure compliance with all local, state, and federal requirements.
- Support the controller and business office to ensure books are closed on a monthly basis.
- Serve on the Board Audit Committee.
- With the controller, maintain appropriate internal controls and workflows.

*Human Resource Management*

- Oversee select human resources activities including payroll and benefits, faculty/staff and family handbook review, and support for training and development.

*Information Technology (IT)*

- Oversee the IT Director to ensure effective use of IT systems to support organizational business processes, including document management, client relationship management (CRM), event support, and fundraising systems.
- With the IT Director, establish and maintain the IT budget, implement a long-term IT strategy to allow for regular updates and improvements to software and hardware, and maintain the security of all school IT systems.

*Risk Management, Security, and Legal Affairs*

- Manage security of staff and students traveling internationally and oversee decisions to ensure that staff and students have the required resources and support.
- Supervise Legal Affairs as necessary, in collaboration with the Head of School.

*Investment Management*

- Work with the Board Investment Committee to track investment performance and oversee transfer of investment funds.

*Facilities Management*

- Oversee the facility manager to assure proper preventive maintenance, cleaning, vendor efficiency and process, and building care.
- Supervise lease execution and renewal.
- Serve on the Facilities Space Committee.

**Desired Qualifications and Characteristics**

The most successful candidates will:

- Be committed to the mission and expectations of a cooperative independent school.
- Speak and communicate effectively with a wide range of constituencies (students, faculty, staff, trustees, parents, alumni, donors, community).
- Strike an effective balance between providing both day-to-day operational oversight and longer-term strategic vision.
- Be willing and able to make difficult, timely, and financially responsible decisions while understanding, articulating, and resolving risk, legal, and institutional considerations.

- Possess a high degree of professional discretion, integrity, good judgment, and high standards of professional conduct.
- Be able to pivot from one task to another within a variety of areas of responsibility smoothly and seamlessly in order to support the Head of School, senior officers, and direct reports and their departments.
- Be a strong, experienced, and sophisticated manager who can create and enforce clear and inclusive administrative systems, policies, and guidelines.
- Embrace a work environment that encourages collaboration, transparency, and creative problem solving.
- Personally value equity and inclusion, embody the spirit of Steven's anti-racist efforts, and possess a global mindset.
- Negotiate effectively, fairly, and openly and demonstrate commitment to a transparent and collaborative decision-making process with all parts of the Stevens community.
- Thrive in a close-knit, student-focused, collaborative community.

Requirements:

- A minimum of eight years of financial management experience in the education or nonprofit sector.
- Deep understanding of the business office function within educational or mission-driven institutions.
- Working knowledge of benefit administration, federal and state employment law, and HR.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills with a demonstrated ability to work collaboratively.
- Bachelor's degree required.

A Summer 2021 start date is anticipated.

Requests for information, written nominations, confidential inquiries, and all application materials should be directed in confidence to:



Ruth Shoemaker Wood, Partner

Nishant Mehta, Partner

Storbeck Search

[StevensCoopDFO@storbecksearch.com](mailto:StevensCoopDFO@storbecksearch.com)

For more information, please visit Stevens Cooperative School home page: <https://www.stevenscoop.org/>

*Stevens Cooperative School is an equal opportunity employer. We do not exclude anyone based on their race, religion, nationality, ethnic origin, or sexual orientation.*